Perelandra 2

number 48 April

The Faces of Midnight

Darrell Schweitzer

When next I opened my eyes, I gazed up at a still grey sky. It was twilight, presaging either morning or eve. I knew not which. I found that I lay on sand by the high-tide mark on a wide, featureless beach. I had no idea what land I had come to. The waves which had deposited me lapped a short distance beyond my feet. My clothing was soaked and the air seemed bitterly cold. I trembled with the damp; my teeth chattered uncontrollably. I rose and walked inland, hoping to find some wood with which to build a fire.

I had not taken more than a dozen steps when I came to a great marvel. A face peered up at me out of the sand, buried save for the eyes, nose, mouth, forehead, and cheeks, and it spoke to me.

"So, so, so, one has come yet living. Surely a great portent of something."

I stood astonished for an instant, then dropped to my knees and began to dig away at the sand, thinking to rescue some poor fellow who had been so cruelly placed there. But as soon as my hand touched the face it vanished, and there was only a heap of sand. I started--this was some illusion of the Fiend.

Even then the voice called out once more, "I thank you, friend, but no hand may free me thus."

I whirled about and saw the face again as it formed like something blown into shape by an impossible wind. I studied the features more closely. It was an old, old man, who bore the lines of long years of toil and pain, whose eyes and expression lacked any lustre of hope.

"You wonder much," he said, "and I shall enlighten you as best I can. My name is Andreas. Men called me a philosopher once, but as the years burdened me further I cared less and less for the pressing questions of astronomy and geomancy and metaphysics and the like. They had been pressing since long before I was born, and I knew they would continue to be so as long as there were two students left to argue over the difference between the real and the ideal. I wanted only to rest, and I found much peace sitting at the end of a wharf with a piece of string in my hand, fishing like a simple man. But one day as I sat there the sea swelled up --it was not during a storm--and reached out as if it were a hand guided by an eye, and snatched me away. There followed only a drifting greyness until I found myself as you see me, here in this place."

"I too came here by strange means. But tell me, if you can, what is the name of this island?"

"The Island of Faces. That is the only name I have known it be. When you travel a little more over it you'll know how it got its name."

I wanted to ask many things, but his eyes closed and he seemed to go to sleep. His features dimmed, became more like sand again.

"Farewell, Andreas," said I. "Perchance this is the Purgatory God has willed for you, and some day you will find rest by the waters of Paradise." I left him, and I knew I did not believe my words. This place was not divine. It was enchanted, which was a different thing

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altogether.

The beach gave way to boulders, and tufts of grass grew between them, along with occasional scrubby, dwarfed trees. And among the stones were three men's heads, all of them dark-faced and black-bearded, people from some eastern land, each witb a golden ring in one ear. I touched them to see if they were real, and as Andreas had, they vanished, and behind me three stones that were not stones took on faces. One mouth drooled and gibbered; one stayed silent; and the other repeated over and over a single line:

"The questing knight comes to the castle black, and sorrow, sorrow, sorrow."

"Friend," I implored him, "tell me your name and what you know of this place." But there was no acknowledgement of my presence in his look, and he went on with his sing-song. His wit was entirely gone, like the others. Surely, I thought, these three had received far more mercy from the maker of this place than many, who were aware of their captivity and the years crawling heedlessly by.

The sky darkened. It was night coming over all. Had I been in the water a day, two days, more? I had lost count of time. In any case, I was still wet, and shivering all the more as the wind rose. After a time the clouds overhead rolled back, and a nearly full moon was revealed. It was by the light of this that I came to a field of high grasses bounded on the far side by a forest, and all the island seemed to come alive with trapped souls. No more were there only a few faces in the sand, or three gibbering Moors among the stones. Now every tuft, every shadow, every boulder, fallen log, ditch, or stream bed had a visage, one, two, a dozen, folk of every land and time, speaking to me in a whisper and a windy wail in tongues I knew and tongues strange to me, all relating their individual dooms, how they had come to this place and been imprisoned.

As I entered the wood I found even more of them, hanging above me in the darkness like dimly seen fruit. From these I learned of a black castle in the centre of the isle, but of the one who dwelt there who was lord over it they knew nothing. They had never seen him. If he moved among them he was a creature invisible, for they never slept.

That piece comes from a short story in the anthology, Distant Worlds: Australian SF & F, copyright 1981 by the editor, Paul Collins. This anthology (published by Cory & Collins in the Land Down Under) gives no bibliographical info on the stories, and I've never seen another work by any of the included authors, though there is a Foreword by Joe Haldeman and I have heard of Keith Taylor and Michael Hailstone. Most of the stories are formulaic, but this and one or two others show brilliance--in "Faces" the narrator stumbles into a scene which has elements from traditional necromancy, European vampire myth, and an Earth-Mother, yet remains internally coherant. All I have to offer y'all, however, is used book shops or the publishers' address.

News in Briefs

Bit of a letdown to pass along. I won't be graduating this semester after all. It all hinged on a petition with the Graduate Dean. My GPA will be (if I get straight As now) 2.91 and 'the book' says you have to be at 3.00--but I had been assured I had a good chance to win approval. Well, now I have to take enough classes and get enough As (two) to get to 3.00 before I get an M.A.

Cathy and I will still be getting married May 25. Tom will be moving out of #165 about mid-May, but I think we've figured out that we can afford to stay in this apartment if we can find another roommate. I'll have to be in Texas until Christmas. I'll still take the comprehensive exams I talked about last time, but if I don't do too well I won't worry because I can retake them in the fall.

My job (selling draperies at Montgomery Ward) got pretty sickening recently, to the point where I was ready to quit. Then, after another evening with too much work and not enough workers, I seemed to turn around (not immediately, but over a week or so) and decide that it just wasn't important enough to worry about. So I've shifted into a mechanical, get-it-done mindframe and feeling much better. Nonetheless, I asked to be transferred to the camera department when a space opens up.

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Game Openings

For all game fees, please add one dollar if paying in Canadian funds.

DIPLOMACY: Gary Behnen (pd), Melinda Holley (pd), Tom Hurst (pd), Dave Pilant (pd), Don Williams, and possibly Rex Martin, are signed up. If everybody pays the game fee ($5) soon, we can get underway soon. If I don't have 7 paid by May first, then I will wait and start this game after Tom Hise moves out, since he wants to play. NEED ONE MORE.

SNOWBALL FIGHTING: Bob Olsen (pd), Jim Burgess (pd), Tom Hurst (pd), Vanessa Williams, and J.R. Baker are signed up. NEED TWO TO FOUR MORE. Fee is $3 including rules; rules $1 alone.

DOWNFALL OF THE LORD OF THE RINGS: Rod Walker (pd) is signed up. Fee is $5 including rules, or get the rules for $1. Next issue I plan to publish a review of three games of Downfall that have run in Britain's Denver Glont.

GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY: I have four signed up, two of those paid. This will be two-week deadlines, no press. Fee is $3.

TITAN: This one is just about ready to take off. Mark Frueh (pd), Bruce Geryk (pd), Gary Behnen (pd), Don Scheifler (not paid), and Ed Wrobel (not paid) are signed up, and I've sent a set of rules to Jeff Zarse. Getcher money ($7.50) in quick. Mark has dibs on the Black legion markers...any other "preference lists"? Rules alone, $1.

Standbys: I really appreciate each of you. Steve Emmert, Tom Hurst, Greg Ellis, Evans Givan, Daf Langley, Gary Behnen, and John Walker make up the standby corps. Rules have been changed here--now you get two issues for joining a standby game, and one for finishing. (Daf and Gary get freebies this time, except that Daphne already has a permanent complementary subscription...)

LITERARY QUIZ

Last month---In which novels do these three lonely "last" heroes appear?

Uncas, in The Last of the Mohicans, by James F. Cooper
Oliver Alden, in The Last Puritan, by George Santayana
Monroe Stahr, in The Last Tycoon, by F. Scott Fitzgerald

And the answers:

Rod Walker "One, Uncas, is a dead giveaway. The answer to Monroe Stahr was in our new Britannica. The answer to Oliver Alden isn't in anything I have here, so I'll to consult the Oxford Companion to Literature (or whatever it is) to get that one. If I were to guess, it's Santayana's novel, "The Last Puritan," but not having read any of the likely candidates, I have no idea, really. I'm very surprised you didn't include one of Bulwer Lytton's numerous "Last" novels in this list." [Editor--Rod, I know you are careful not to get letters published, but I figured this little bit couldn't hurt. Let me know if I'm wrong. Rod then listed his guesses separately--all correct.]

Steve Emmert "I blew last month's quiz (I guessed T.S. Eliot, for some silly reason), and will be quite hopeless this month. The only things I can think of beginning with The Last... are Starfighter and Picture Show, and I'm not sure that those were ever novels. [Ed.: Oh, yes, The Last Picture Show (Larry McMurtry) was an excellent novel. Don't sweat it; I've never seen the movie either! ...Steve continues:] I don't suppose we'll be seeing any future quizzes dealing with _____ _____'s _____s, will we? I thought not." [Ed.: I'm working on it...]

Steve Langley "It's been about 39 years since I read the book , but it's my impression that Natty Bumpo (a.k.a. Hawkeye) was the last of the Mohicans. Granted, he was only an adopted tribesman, but adoption among Indians was more than a symbolic gesture--he was a Mohican." [Ed.: True, true. If you could have answered the other two, I would've given you credit...]

So Rod wins 1/2 issue, and this time we got a lot of partial answers. Also, there were a couple of comments on writing generated by the Quiz and last month's letter column. I'm sending all notes on literature to the lettercol unless they deal specifically with the

current month's question (Jim-Bob, Bob, Bruce G all take note). This month's questions (yes, two) are each worth 1/2 issue; Rod Walker wrote the first one.

1. Poetry is generally an occupation which earns starvation wages (if any). Few poets have ever been able to earn a living at writing poetry overall, and even fewer were ever well paid. One notable exception was a poet whose first published poem appeared in a newspaper. That poem, in the course of his lifetime, earned him over $250,000! It was also virtually the only poem he ever wrote which was considered very good. His reputation as a failed, one-poem, poet, was redeemed toward the end of his life by a startlingly powerful poem about one of his nation's leaders. Who was the poet and what was the poem which earned him so much money?

2. Hunger, a chilling study of the disintegration of a human mind under the stress of physical deprivation, was written by Norway's most famous modern novelist. A vagabond for much of his life, he lived briefly in Minnesota at the turn of the century. Later he was condemned for welcoming the Nazi invaders of Norway in 1940. What was his name?

For those who have lamented that the Quiz is too hard--you're right. But it takes a bit of research to come up with 'easy' questions that won't cost me 5 or 10 dollars. So keep on trying and I'll start spreading out the range of difficulty.

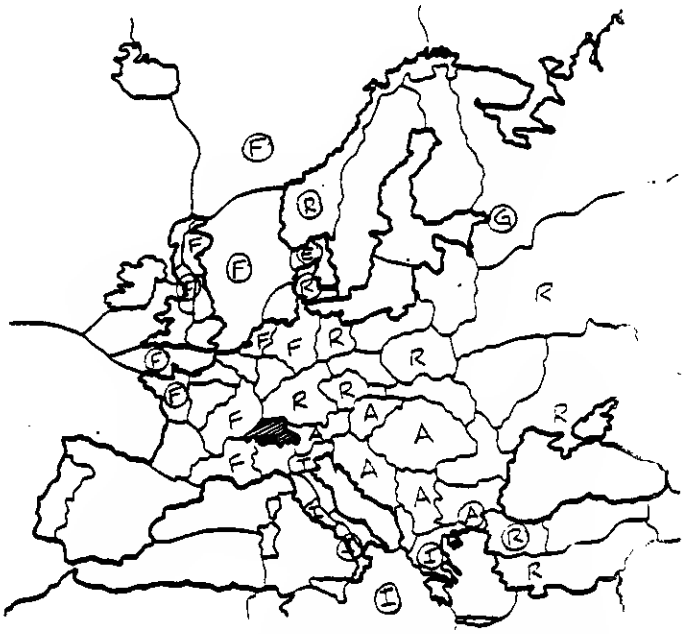
For the record: Rod wins another 1/2 issue IF I get three letters in response to his question AND nobody guesses correctly (I was wrong on this one).

TANITH 85CS

Autumn 1905: England retreats f nwy-ska;
Italy retreats a mun and a tri otb (*note, there was a possible retreat for a tri to alb*)

UNANIMOUS VOTE IN U.N./MOON MADE OF GREEN CHEESE
Well, it almost happened. Four of you requested season separation...

Winter 1905
Austria (Greg Ellis): builds a bud; also has a tyo, a tri, a vie, a ser, f bul/sc.
England (John Walker): removes f wal, a lon & f hel; has only f ska.
France (Matt Kazur): builds f bre & a mar; also has f nts, f nwg, f lvp, a edi, f eng, a hol, a kie, a bur.
Germany (J.R. Baker): even, has f stp/sc.
Italy (John Crosby): builds f nap, a rom; also has a ven, f gre, f ion.
Russia (Evans Givan): builds armies war, mos & sev (plays one short); also has a nwy, f den, a ber, a mun, a boh, f con, a smy.



Addresses after Nordeen.

Deadline for Spring 1906 moves is 11pm Central, 28 April 1987 (Wednesday the 29th by mail).

Paris to Moscow: You disappoint me, Evans. I had hoped for better from you.
Paris to Vienna: Meanwhile, I continue to hope for anything from you.
Russia to Turkey: So long, paint. Once again, in defeat you were victorious.
Russia to Italy: Welcome to the Great Karroo. Let's go about 2000 miles and talk about this, OK? [Ed.: "Great Karroo" is the Blade's pet name for Daf, who did not make it into this game. Thanks for the orders just the same, Sweetboots.]

As Time, in his unvaried round,
Brings year by year old April back,
Still, as of yore, we've ever found,
Upon the same dull, beaten track,
A lot of folks who undertake
Of other people fools to make,
And who, by making fools of others,
Most clearly prove themselves their brothers.

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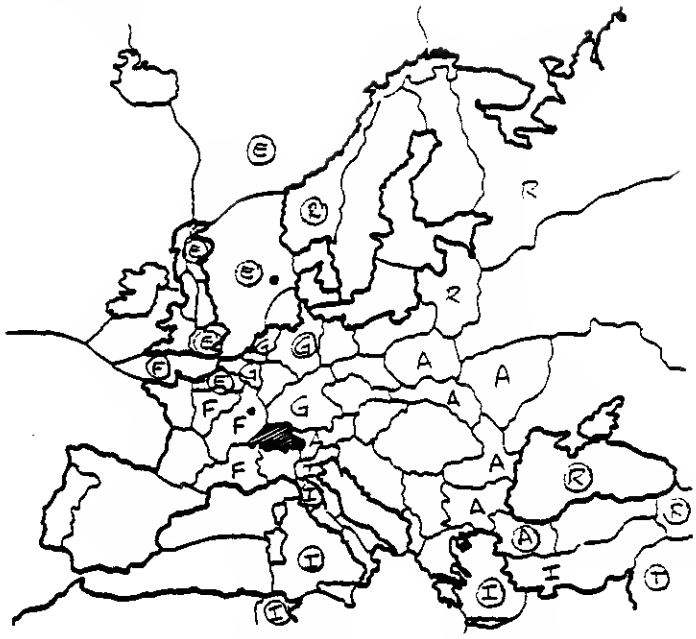
NORDEEN 86AH

I/A BLOWS A BUBBLE

Spring 1904
Austria (Jim Diehl): a bud-gal, a vie-tyo, a war-mos, a rum-ukr, a ser-rum (a bul s), f smy-con.
England (Hugh Christie): f edi s f nwg, f yor-nts (f lon & f nwg s), f bel-pic (Fs).
France (Will Woodard): a pic-par, a gas-bur (a mar s), f eng s Ef bel-pic.
Germany (Steve Langley): f kie-hol, a hol-yor /imp/, a ruh-bel (a bur s) /a bur r ruh otb/, a mun h.
Italy (Rob Wittmond): f nap-tyn, f rom-tus, a tri-ven, a gre-smy (f aeg c), f ion-tun.
Russia (John Crosby): f nts s Ga hol-bel /nso/ /f nts r ska den hel otb/ (f nwy s f nts), a fin-stp, a lvn-mos, f bla-rum, f ank-arm.
Turkey (Ben Schilling): f syria holds.



Oops! Addresses after letter column---

Deadline for Summer '04 (R, G) and Fall '04 is 4/29 by mail, 4/28 by phone. My thanks to Gary Behnen for standby orders, and thanks to Jim Diehl for the most entertaining set of conditional orders I've ever seen! Believe it or not, folks, the only press came from Gary.

the Hobby Small Fry Protection League report

First, the participants: Publisher-members include Pete Gaughan, Ken Peel, Greg Ellis, Michael Ehli*, Don Del Grande*, James F. Burgess Jr., and John Walker. Player-members are Guy Hail, Terry Tallman*, and Ed Wrobel. (* indicates tentative membership, no current info on file).

Second, the purpose: to provide Dipsters a place to organize and compete in a hobby full of big names, big zines, and swelled heads. The HSFPL has been standing up for the little guy in Dipdom for more than three years now.

Finally, the latest news: in the People's Diplomacy Organization's annual auction, I, P.J. Gaughan outbid all others for the post of Generalissimo. This gives me exclusive authority to exercise what miniscule power the HSFPL has. All members are ordered to send in detailed proposals for what the heck we do next. Above all, your nominations for a "bigwig" publisher to be Nuked by the HSFPL are solicited.

Literary Calendar

This month, the Calendar expands to honor the opening of baseball season...

1 April 1924: Adolf Hitler is imprisoned for his involvement in the Munich Putsch, and begins to dictate Mein Kampf to Rudolf Hess. Its original title--Four and a Half Years of Struggle Against Liew, Stupidity, and Cowardice: Settling Accounts with the Destroyers of the National Socialist Movement--leads one wag to comment: "Everyone needs an editor".

5 April 1926: H.L. Mencken is arrested in Boston in front of hundreds of cheering spectators after selling a banned copy of the American Mercury to the Chief Watcher of Boston's Watch and Ward Society.

15 April 1947: Modern baseball's first black major league player, Jackie Robinson, goes 0 for 3 in his debut versus Boston.

20 April 1887: Oscar Wilde writes: "Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is usually Judas who writes the biography."

25 April 1970: Detroit pitcher Earl Wilson almost circles the bases on a strikeout when Twins' catcher Paul Ratliff, who traps the ball on a called third strike, thinks the inning is over and rolls the ball to the mound. When the Twins wake up, they tag out Wilson rounding third.

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Opinions and Editorials and Letters

All I ever really needed to know I learned in kindergarten

By Robert Fulghum

Most of what I really need to know about how to live, and what to do, and how to be, I learned in kindergarten. Wisdom was not at the top of the graduate school mountain but there in the sandbox at nursery school.

These are the things I learned: Share everything. Play fair. Don't hit people. Put things back where you found them. Clean up your own mess. Don't take things that aren't yours. Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody. Wash your hands before you eat. Flush. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you. Live a balanced life. Learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

Take a nap every afternoon. When you go out into the world, watch for traffic, hold hands and stick together. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the plastic cup. The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.

Goldfish and hamsters and white mice and even the little seed in the plastic cup—they all die. So do we.

And then remember the book about Dick and Jane and the first word you learned, the biggest word of all: LOOK. Everything you need to know is in there somewhere. The Golden Rule and love and basic sanitation. Ecology and politics and sane living.

Think of what a better world it would be if we all—the whole world—had cookies and milk about 3 o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with our blankets for a nap. Or if we had a basic policy in our nation and other nations to always put things back where we found them and cleaned up our own messes. And it is still true, no matter how old you are, when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together.

I could ramble for hours on Iranamok, the Southern Methodist U. football scandal, or my upcoming wedding, but for some reason what I really want to talk about is games. Now, I'm not a typical gamer. I have never played a game involving military simulation, and the only role-playing I've ever done is Advanced D&D (skipped right over plain ol' D&D, I guess).

But a month ago I swore off gaming, so that I could be fully prepared for master's exams and caught up in my homework by the time Arling-con came around. I promised to keep Diplomacy letters and press to a minimum, and to avoid face-to-face sessions of Titan or Survive. Well, ha. Not only did I spend an evening playing Titan (see "Obsessions"), but in the last four weeks I have:

played Survive twice;
sent guest press to two games;
created a team of characters for an upcoming session of Traveller: 2300 role-playing;
played Illuminati once; and
dressed out a vehicle for a planned series of Car Wars matches with my roommate.

So I'm behind (though not much) in school and the zien (zien? I like it...) is roughly a day behind schedule. But at least my hands stopped shaking and the migraine went away! --PJG

It's *Me* Again · by Cathy Sexton

Hi! I've been at work all day. I'm tired and I'm supposed to write something. I just kind of feel like rambling so I hope you'll put up with me. I guess I kind of have a question that I'm afraid to ask but I'll ask it anyway. Do y'all ever read this or do you just find the games you're in? I know I read Magus cover to cover (if Pete lets me know it's arrived). Well, I guess I tend to skip over games, but I usually read the press. Do y'all read this?

Do you want a wedding update? Well, you're getting one. Pete has finally gone to look for a suit. I have my dress on lay-away (and my dad has a second job now to pay for it). I still haven't ordered flowers but we have the place picked out. For some reason Pete hasn't found out about where the rehearsal dinner will be (jab jab). But I keep telling myself, Don't worry. We could make history--our rehearsal dinner could be at McDonald's. Well, Pete is probably on the verge of murdering me, so I'll drop that. Anyway, the plans are moving.

It's been a busy boring day today. I guess I haven't told you but I work at a party store. No, we don't party all the time. We sell stuff for parties: plates, cups, napkins, balloons, streamers, just about anything else you can think of. The name of the shop is Cissy's Party World. It was kind of funny how I was hired. (This should also help you understand how the store is run.) Many moons ago my mom and I were shopping. We happened to stop by this party store I had never been to before, to see whether they had some gift wrapping paper. At the check-out counter I asked, with some hesitation, "Would you happen to be hiring?" The lady behind the counter says--before I could hardly take a breath--"Yes, be here tomorrow at 9am. Oh, by the way, what's your name?" I told her I was Cathy and I went on my way.

The next day, to make a good impression, I arrive at 8:45. The doors are locked. Oh, well, I guess they don't get here too early. So I went back to my car. I waited and waited and waited. About 9:30 someone I've never seen before drives up, gets out, and opens the

door. I get out and come in. This lady asks me if I need some help finding something. I explain I'm supposed to start working here. She then says, "Oh, yeah, Cissy mentioned something about that yesterday, but she couldn't remember your name." Well, we got acquainted and she showed me some stuff. Then day #2 comes along. I get to work at 9 am--no earlier! The doors are already open and there's someone I've never seen before inside. Here we go again...She asks, "May I help you?" I explain again that I work here. She says, "Boy, that was quick--gone one day and things change."

Anyway, I became very good friends with all three women listed above. Cissy and I are the only ones left from that time. We have part-time people and one other full-time chick (who I've had my problems with). All in all it's an interesting boring, exciting, dull job.

But aren't most? Bye!

Obsessions by Tom Hise

It's the end of March and I come before you again. Now what ritual occurrence happens in a college student's life in March? That's right, Don, spring break! Will everyone please give Don a hand, thank you. Now, what do all good students do on spring break. Yes, in the back, right Steve, they go to Florida and party with Spuds McKensie®. Now for the hard question: what do hobby members do on spring break? Okay, Daf, do you have the answer? Very good, all good hobby members "game till they drop." Very good, I'm pleased with all of you. So, class, what did I do for spring break? Right, I gamed till I dropped.

I had a very fun game of Titan with Don Scheifler, Robert Flowers (a friend from high school), and Pete. I was even in the lead until Don sent a legion to assassinate my Titan. One of these days I'll shake Don's hand and tell him he played a good game. Being a gracious winner would be fun to try for once; I have being a gracious loser down pat.

Robert had come over that afternoon so we played an assortment of games. Does anyone out there play Blood Bowl? I'd like to compare notes on your interpretation of a few rules, if you do. [Editor's note: A review of Blood Bowl has already been written here, and will be published as soon as we find space.] Anyway, I got so wrapped up in the games I forgot about the laundry I had been doing in the washers here at the apartment complex. I realized this after security had locked the doors for the night. So the next morning I went to check and the clothes were gone. (I now know how all those npc's in Dungeons and Dragons had felt after my band of adventurers had come through!) Before panicking, I took a deep breath and walked over to the office. I told them that I had a slight problem--fortunately, they had my clothes. I politely told them thanks, and murmured that all I needed now was to find my head. So if anyone reading this has seen a round head with big ears, two chins, bloodshot hazel eyes, unshaven cheeks, and a tiny nose and mouth, laying around your backyard or in the gutter, please send it care of "Save the Head Foundation" to the address on page one. If you show up with the head at Arlingcon your admission is free (actually, so is everybody else's).

Once spring break was over I had to call a gaming freeze to recover, but at Arlingcon I'll "game till I drop" again! See you!

from Bob Olsen (16 March 1987)

You were right the first time. The Demolished Man was the Hugo winner back in '53 (I remember it well...). The other Bester novel you're thinking of, circa '56 or so, was The Stars My Destination which was somewhat similar, at least in that it had lots of those typological tricks and little pictures and stuff.

By the way, there were a couple of pretty distinguished runners-up in 1953: The Space Merchants by Pohl & Kornbluth, and More Than Human by Sturgeon. Then the next year the award was won by a fairly wretched novel by Mark Clifton and someone else whose name escapes me (or more precisely I'm thinking of two names and only one of 'em's correct). So it goes.

[Pete: I checked with Anatomy of Wonder and you're right--my "correction" came about because I read a Washington Post article which mentioned Stars as the first Hugo winner. See what happens when you trust Washington? Also, the Clifton+?? novel you mention won in 1956, not right after the first award. Hey, every award has its flaws--I'd still like to win one!

[Bob continues after (somehow) dragging Don Williams' name into his letter...]

Perelandra

Speaking of Williams and his clique, you have a new member. In addition to the old anti-Olsen cabal of you, Don, and Daphne, John Caruso has decided to come out against me as well. I know how humiliating this must be for you...don't forget you can always defect back to the Light Side (tastes great--less filling) if this gets to be too much of an embarrassment to you. I'm still trying to think of a derisive generic name for the Williams gang. "Junta" is taken. "Titans" is singularly inappropriate. How about "Awful Green Things From Outer Space?"

[Pete: for those who missed the irony, this latest round of name-calling is all in fun. Bob, why not call us "Champions" (keeping in line with your game-name pattern)? Or even "the Allies" (making you and Kathy Caruso "The Axis").]

from Jim Burgess (2 March 1987)

I knew [the answer to last month's quiz on Lord Byron] but never got around to writing in. To contradict Ben, Byron was leading Greek freedom fighters in their battle against the Ottoman Empire. None too swift, he camped and drilled them in a swamp so they all got malaria. Byron, as was the "custom" of the age, died of the bloodletting.

...Ken Peel stole my idea....I suggested World Dipcon first. Anyway, I hope we "win." Don't take our Dipcon away. [Ed.: Ken reports that Richard Walkerdine, at least, has dropped the notion of moving Dipcon wholesale and is now in favor of this "Worldcon" concept.]

Need I say more--I want hobby-generated fiction in Pere! I won't write it though.

from Bruce Geryk (3 March 1987)

I must admit that I was mildly disappointed by your reprints. When you stated that you would be reprinting classic literature, I thought that your reprints would either be longer or would be serialized. In fact, had I just seen #46, I would have thought that you were serializing The Demolished Man. The short nature of the reprints seems to be just a bit self-defeating. I have had plans for some time to do a few reprints of Slavic literature in BI [Ed.: Bruce's zine, Blunt Instruments], but I plan to stretch a work out over several issues in order to make it complete. Your editorial skill, however, seems to be quite high, as the choice of excerpts has been very good.

In any case, I can see Pere's tidbits encouraging others to read the work in question, rather than be entertaining in their own right, so I don't mean to be critical. Just some observations. ...

The suggestion about hobby-generated fiction is an interesting one. What I think it boils down to is the purpose you have in mind for Perelandra. The problem is that I suspect that most of the "hobby" fiction you receive will be bad. ...If your purpose is to provide "quality" reprints (and original fiction) you will probably have to set very high submission standards. On the other hand, if you don't care about the quality as long as it promotes involvement (a legitimate attitude in a hobby like this), you won't have to worry as much.

[Pete: After four years, I'm still not real sure each month whether everybody will see the month's excerpts in the same light I do. If I publish a complete poem or song, the readers get to see the whole thing but some will just not pay as much attention because of the genre itself. But I do get comments--in fact, the chief form of feedback here--like, "The snippets you print really encourage me to go and get that item (or something else) for myself."

[I do try to choose things people can enjoy in themselves (the Joyce excerpt last month was a good example). So we have several criteria, and a work which meets more than two is likely to show up here: classic (famous or should be), good writing, self-contained (can be published in one issue), and obscure (Capek's War of the Newts last summer--copy of that issue should be enclosed for you, Bruce).

[Bruce also sent, with a later letter, copies of two short works translated from Polish. Thank you very much!]

from Ed Wrobel (28 February 1987)

My only real complaint [with postal Titan] so far is that one player has dragged out a battle for far too long. I have complained to the GM but there always seems to be an excuse like alleged nonreceipt of mail. I don't know what can be done in this kind of situation. Larzelere has a suggestion that battle moves be made within three days and a provision for

the GM to declare a forfeit. I suppose it's a matter of enforcement. [Ed.: My experience is that it's also a matter of interest. If your Titan report is only moves, you need very interested players, just like warehouse Dip games. On the other hand, if somebody enjoys getting the report/zine for other reasons, it's easier for them to remember to write Titan orders too.]

Jason Russ (Stonehouse Road, Somers NY 10589) is running a game with several rules changes. He does not wish to allow legions to move "through" one another, so he declares an engagement in such situations. I think this makes it very difficult for the GM. Russ is also using the averaging system to determine hits instead of random number tables. I kind of like the uncertainty of the tables.

P.S. Russ just revised his rules for determining an engagement. Legions can move through one another (if both are moving, as in Larzelere's rules and don't end up in the same land) unless the pursuing player states that he is hunting the legion in question. Each player can have only one hunter per turn.

[Pete: These are all fascinating modifications, but I'm going to have my hands full running this game for the first time under the familiar rules. While typing Bruce's letter I noticed that he had signed up for a couple of games and I hadn't noted that earlier--I'll try to go back and fix it, but just to be sure:

///TITAN and DOWNFALL potential players--add Bruce Geryk (pd) to the list. THIS MEANS TITAN IS READY TO GO AS SOON AS TWO MORE PEOPLE PAY THE $7.50 FEE (Don S. will be at Arlingcon this weekend so I fully expect to get his fee then). Ed, you have dibs on the last slot, since you signed up early.///

DIPLOMACY PLAYER ROSTER FOR TANITH AND NORDEEN
J.R. Baker 3100 Meadow Lane N Dickinson TX 77539
Gary Behnen 13101 S Trenton Olathe KS 66062 (well, no, he's not playing, but...)
Hugh Christie 43 E Houston Avenue Montgomery PA 17752
John Crosby 1496 Washington Lane W Chester PA 19382-6871
Gregory M Ellis 700 Rio Grande Austin TX 78701-2720
Jim Diehl 10530 W Riverview Drive Eden Prairie MN 55344
Evans Givan 8066 Camstock Court Citrus Hts CA 95610-4606
Matt Kazur Box 5492 Washington DC 20016
Steve Langley 2296 Eden Roc Lane #1 Sacramento CA 95825-3350
John Walker 4819 Corian Oak San Antonio TX 78219
Rob Wittmond 4315 182nd Street #308 Torrance CA 90504
Will Woodard 1921 Tracey Circle Irving TX 75060

Well, every month we come down to the same thing--do we print another two pages, or not? With the Runestone flyer I'm at the one-ounce limit after I get to the bottom of this page (the Blood Bowl review I mentioned earlier should fit on the back cover).

I should mention that if you are interested in having a game published, J.R. Baker will make a bid for it. He is willing to go into the business of manufacturing games with the sources, etc, we're drumming up for Snowball Fighting.

And so we have just enough room for a final piece of fun...

Saisei Muroo (1889-1962)
"Inside a Deep Isolation"

When a musician steps down off the stage,
when he steps down, sent off with the clapping of a fine group of people,
what an intense and deserted isolation he must feel.
In spite of that thunder of admiration
how deeply a fine musician, outside the bounds of the crowd of people,
must love with a passion the height of isolation that is his.

Blood Bowl ($25, Games Workshop/UK) has more problems than potential for me, yet it is intriguing enough that I want to let you know about it. If the ambiguous rules ever get cleared up, I'll be a Blood Bowl fan.

The main reason I like it is that it's a two-player non-wargame, of maybe two or three hours' playing time. Finding a game like this can be a pain. But even more, the game appears to be fun and interesting in the way Snowball Fighting is: silly, but with enough earnest complexity to be challenging.

A standard football field, with a football lying on the 50, is invaded by two teams of 11 players each (plus 4 reserves), from several fantasy races. One team eventually picks up the football and tries to carry it across the goal line, by passes or free kicks in addition to rushing; players may tackle (no blocking here, just tackle that defender!) or attack other players, with outcomes (including injuries) based on Combat Skill, Toughness and Strength.

The problems with the rules involve things left unsaid--what's in the rules is fairly plain. For instance, a loose ball must be checked against a Scatter Table--but there's no mention of how to align the Table with the playing field. More importantly, no mention is made of whether opposing coaches should be allowed to see which player has which characteristics before that characteristic comes into play (that man open downfield could be a sure-handed receiver or a clumsy decoy). The order in which tackles and attacks are allocated and resolved is unclear; and we can't tell whether substituting players are supposed to enter the field from the sideline or from the first square on the field proper.

Of course, Tom and I can settle these between us and just play--but we'd like to know what the designer and playtesters have decided. But the key advantage of the game is spelled out--the varying characteristics of the races. Elven teams are fast and cool and throw the bomb; dwarves are tougher but slower. There are several specialized player-types (ogres, mummies, skavens (mutated rats), and so on), and limitations in exchange for each benefit. The rules also lay out the possibility of 'campaigns', whole seasons of Blood Bowl matches.

Perelandra

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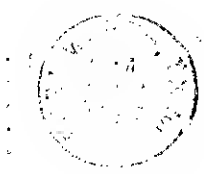
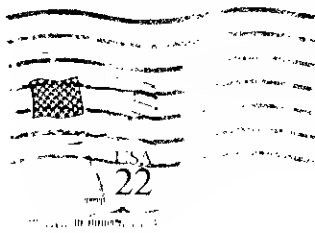
Arlington, Texas 76010





4/2

Your IDHOF stuff arrived on short notice! I'll try to write up Noms tomorrow.

P

Larry Peery
Box 8416
San Diego, CA
92102-0416

YOUR SUBSCRIPTION ENDS WITH... E

☐ THIS IS A FREE ISSUE

**May the Road rise up to meet you;
may the wind be ever at your back;
and may the Lord hold you in the hollow of His hand.**